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OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW
OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
Second session
8-12 May 1995
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the International Service for Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. The United Nations stands to benefit from the wealth of cultural and political perspectives of the vigorous civil society emerging in newly democratizing societies, whose voices are seldom heard in New York and Geneva. Such expanded participation is all the more important now that civil society is opening up in many regions where opportunities for non-governmental organizations' action were previously restricted.

2. The purpose of the non-governmental organizations' participation in meetings of United Nations bodies is to provide United Nations bodies with expertise and experience that enhance the quality of its deliberations, while expressing the concerns and aspirations of constituencies that might otherwise not be heard.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

3. In the view of the International Service for Human Rights, a clear distinction needs to be made between non-governmental organizations' participation in occasional United Nations conferences and in the normal meetings of United Nations bodies and committees. The attendance of great numbers of non-governmental organizations at international conferences was only made possible by special voluntary funds not normally available to them, particularly to national non-governmental organizations from the South. In fact, participation by non-governmental organizations at regular meetings of United Nations bodies has largely remained steady in the last five years, and has even decreased in some instances. For example, at the Commission on Human Rights, non-governmental organizations' attendance has dropped from 169 organizations in 1993 to 158 in 1994 and 135 in 1995. Oral statements from non-governmental organizations at the Commission declined last year (337 in 1994) relative to the two previous years (414 in 1993 and 364 in 1992).

4. Experience has shown that representativeness should not be the only criterion for granting consultative status. In fact, there is not necessarily a direct relationship between the representativeness (based on size) of a non-governmental organization and its ability to provide the needed expertise and knowledge.

5. Consultation with the Member State concerned, as required by Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, should not constitute a process of government authorization or clearance. The practice used in some international conferences should be followed in granting consultative status, whereby the Government of the country where the applicant non-governmental organization claims to be located is informed and its views, if any, are shared with the applicant non-governmental organization in order to assist the Secretariat in clarifying the situation. The information provided by the Government and the non-governmental organizations' response should both be considered by the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in making its final decision on the approved criteria.

6. Another issue of concern in the current draft resolution (see E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1) is the misunderstanding regarding the nature of the affiliation of national non-governmental organizations to regional and international non-governmental organizations. International organizations with branches or field offices in several countries may, as an internal matter, preclude these branches and offices from seeking consultative status independently. On the other hand, many national and regional non-governmental organizations, especially those coming from countries with economies in transition and developing countries, whose work is most relevant to the United Nations, are affiliated with international organizations or federations but not as branches or field offices. These non-governmental organizations formulate and implement their own policies and operate entirely independently as indigenous and autonomous organizations. It is, therefore, both inappropriate and counter-productive for the United Nations to attempt to regulate such internal matters or to exclude in principle national organizations affiliated to an international or regional non-governmental organization.

7. Practical arrangements can be made that will reduce the burden related to the increased number of non-governmental organizations with consultative status to manageable proportions, although we believe that only a limited number of organizations newly granted status are likely to make written submissions, so that the financial and practical implications would not be detrimental to the smooth functioning of the United Nations. However, if the financial resources of the United Nations cannot absorb an increase in translation and reproduction services, the non-governmental organizations concerned could exceptionally undertake the translation themselves and accept that their documents be distributed by the United Nations only in the languages in which they are submitted. In many cases, national non-governmental organizations admitted to consultative status who are unable to send representatives to United Nations meetings will rely on submitting documents as their principal form of interaction with United Nations bodies.

8. It is generally agreed among non-governmental organizations that one of the most effective ways of reducing the cost of non-governmental organizations' participation in United Nations meetings and procedures is for the organizations to coordinate joint oral and written submissions. While such coordination is in the interest of the work of non-governmental organizations, it should remain their responsibility and should not be imposed by the United Nations.

9. The International Service for Human Rights proposes the following changes to the draft resolution contained in document E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1:

(a) Paragraph 9, line 3, delete the phrase "which are not affiliated to an international organization already in status,";

(b) Paragraph 9, add <u>in fine</u>:

> "Such consultations shall allow the Member State concerned to be informed that a non-governmental organization claiming to be established on its territory is applying for consultative status and communicate its views, if any, to the Secretariat. If these views might affect the decision on admission, they shall be communicated to the non-governmental organization concerned, which shall have the opportunity to respond to the views of the Member State. The views of both the Member State and the applicant non-governmental organization shall be taken into consideration in deciding whether or not the applicant meets the criteria for admission. Negative views by the Member State concerned shall not <u>ipso facto</u> preclude admission";

(c) Paragraph 11, revise to read "The organization shall be of recognized standing within the particular field of its competence or of a representative character";

(d) Paragraph 15, revise to read "National organizations that are affiliated to an international or regional non-governmental organization covering the same subjects may be admitted unless the international or regional non-governmental organization concerned objects on the basis of its statutory relation with the affiliate seeking admission";

(e) Paragraph 16, delete entire paragraph;

(f) Paragraph 17, add in fine "Consultative arrangements with a specialized agency shall not preclude consultative status with the Council";

(g) Paragraph 23, last line, delete "in all areas and regions of the world";

(h) Paragraph 25 (b), line 7, delete "internationally and regionally";

(i) Paragraph 26, delete entire paragraph;

(j) Paragraph 27, line 1, delete "in particular";

(k) Paragraph 31, add in fine "If exceptionally the Secretary-General lacks the resources to circulate statements by non-governmental organizations in all the official languages, their written statements shall be circulated in the languages in which they are submitted";

(l) Paragraph 32 (e), line 3, add, after "special consultative status," the words "or on the Roster";

(m) Paragraph 32 (f), delete entire subparagraph;

(n) Paragraph 33 (a), revise as follows:

> "The Council or any of its subsidiary bodies may authorize non-governmental organizations in general or special consultative status or on the Roster to be heard. Where the item under consideration concerns a matter in which non-governmental organizations have been particularly active or in which they possess recognized expertise, the body in question should allow such non-governmental organizations to make brief statements during the consideration of such items";

(o) Paragraph 37, add in fine "If exceptionally the Secretary-General lacks the resources to circulate statements by non-governmental organizations in all the official languages, their written statements shall be circulated in the languages in which they are submitted;

(p) Paragraph 38 (f), replace the word "may" with the words "shall normally";

(q) Paragraph 39, revise to read as follows:

> "The commission or other subsidiary organs shall normally consult with organizations in general or special consultative status or on the Roster either directly or through a committee or committees established for the purpose. In all cases, such consultations shall be arranged at the request of the organization. Where the item under consideration concerns a matter in which non-governmental organizations have been particularly active or in which they possess

recognized expertise, the body in question should allow such non-governmental organizations to make brief statements during the consideration of such items";

(r) Paragraph 40, replace the words "paragraph 30" with the words "paragraph 40";

(s) Paragraph 42, replace the phrase "in consultative status" with the phrase "in general or special consultative status or on the Roster";

(t) Paragraph 52, revise to read as follows:

"Relevant non-governmental organizations may make written presentations in the official languages of the United Nations as they deem appropriate in the conference and its preparatory process. Those written presentations shall be issued as official documents in accordance with United Nations rules or procedure";

(u) Paragraph 58, add, after the first sentence "In addition, two seats shall be reserved for non-voting members from non-governmental organizations with consultative status to be designated in accordance with a procedure to be established by the non-governmental organizations with consultative status";

(v) Paragraph 59 (d), after the words "special consultative status", add the words "and on the Roster";

(w) Paragraph 59 (e), after the words "special consultative status", add the words "and on the Roster", and change "25 (a)" to "33 (a)".

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Second session
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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the Conference of Non-governmental Organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

INTRODUCTION

1. There is a great diversity of non-governmental organizations among those in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and among the membership of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO). In keeping with its mandate, CONGO advocates first and foremost that non-governmental organizations in consultative status should have every opportunity to present their views with respect to the proposed revision of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

2. While the right of each organization in consultative status to present its own views is fully respected, CONGO also provides a forum through which non-governmental organizations can seek and express consensus. To that end, CONGO has initiated wide-ranging consultations involving both its members and other organizations having consultative status. In addition CONGO has undertaken initiatives and held meetings in order to develop dialogue with organizations that are currently not in consultative status.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

9. The introduction should definitely focus upon the positive contribution of the work of non-governmental organizations in relation to the Charter of the United Nations as well as its ongoing work. It would be counterproductive to introduce questionable assertions that would only have the effect of detracting from the importance of the historical and potential contribution of non-governmental organizations to the United Nations.

References to Agenda 21 (para. 1, para. 7)

10. It is not appropriate to highlight that any single United Nations event or document in a framework resolution of this kind that deals with non-governmental organizations' participation related to many aspects of the work of the United Nations. While Agenda 21 is one of the significant documents that has been adopted by United Nations Member States in recent times, it is itself part of a broader evolving process. Moreover, the use of Agenda 21 as a definition document for non-governmental organizations' participation in this framework resolution is confusing in that Agenda 21 itself is not sufficiently coherent in its definition of non-governmental organizations.

National affiliates of international non-governmental organizations (para. 15)

11. CONGO believes that there is general agreement on the desirability of further enhancing the participation of national non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world in the activities of the United Nations. However, it is our opinion that not enough work has been done to think through the implications of how this shared objective may best be achieved. The proposed paragraph 15 might have unintended consequences: would it not be a disincentive for non-governmental organizations to maintain their relationship with international and regional organizations, thereby weakening rather than strengthening international solidarity?

12. CONGO is not suggesting new wording on paragraph 15, because it wants to identify its content as an important substantive issue that deserves more time and attention on the part of the Working Group. CONGO would, however, draw particular attention to the resolution of its Nineteenth General Assembly, in which it affirmed, inter alia,

> That participation of non-governmental organizations from developing countries should be strengthened through a multifaceted process fully recognizing the crucial role played by international, regional and subregional non-governmental organizations, and further expressed concern, inter alia,
>
> Over the discrimination practised against national affiliates that wish to be represented at United Nations world conferences as part of the delegations of their international non-governmental organizations.

Competency criteria (para. 25)

13. We believe that option 1 is a good proposal because it:

(a) Relates to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations;

(b) Reflects the ongoing relationship between the work of the United Nations and that of non-governmental organizations as a criteria for admittance;

(c) Incorporates the rich history of the consultative status process;

(d) Allows for an evolving consultative input that would include the wide diversity of experiences and constituencies of non-governmental organizations.

SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE WORDING

Paragraph 4

14. The language of paragraph 4 is confusing regarding the matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council. CONGO suggests that paragraph 4 be deleted and the original paragraph 1 be retained, with the addition of "environment" and "humanitarian issues". The more complete listing of issues in old paragraph 1 is helpful in that it builds upon the existing mandate of the Council.

15. CONGO proposes the following wording:

> The organization shall be concerned with matters falling within the competence of the Economic and Social Council with respect to international economic, social, environmental, cultural, educational, health, scientific, technological and related matters and to humanitarian issues and human rights.

Paragraph 7

16. The attempt to present a checklist of non-governmental organizations is unsuccessful and raises more questions than it answers. For example, there is no reference to trade union organizations, which are the social partners of business organizations and government. CONGO proposes that the new text be deleted.

Paragraphs 8-10

17. These paragraphs require further discussion and possible reordering subsequently.

Paragraph 11

18. The phrase "covering, where possible, a substantial number of countries in different regions of the world" (old para. 4) should be retained.

Paragraph 25

19. CONGO suggests that option No. 1 be accepted (see para. 13 above).

Paragraphs 31 and 37

20. CONGO proposes that the phrase "subject to available resources" be deleted.

21. If adopted, the practical effect of that change would almost certainly be to restrict the ability of non-governmental organizations to have their written statements circulated by the Secretariat in the working languages as official documents of the functional commissions. Thus, the proposal would curtail one of the most important participatory rights successfully practised over the years.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

22. The draft proposals make several references to Secretariat support, the provision of necessary resources, and improving the coordination within the Secretariat of units dealing with non-governmental organizations (see paras. 18 and 66). Those proposals respond to concerns expressed by CONGO over many years and reaffirmed at its Nineteenth General Assembly. It is crucial that such important proposals be accompanied by appropriate budgetary provisions at United Nations Headquarters, United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna, and the regional commissions.

23. In the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is more important than ever to keep in mind the fundamental objective of these procedures, which must surely be to strengthen the relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The growing vigour of grass-roots movements and of their international linkages is a phenomenon of our time that responds to profound human needs and provides opportunities for the reinvigoration of the United Nations and its institutions. The strength of that phenomenon in developing countries and countries with economies in transition provides the prospect of achieving true universality in the institutions and organizations of international solidarity. The challenge before States and non-governmental organizations alike is to establish procedures that will seize those opportunities by introducing a new dynamic into the international solidarity that was foreseen in Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations.

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OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON
THE REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS
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NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the World Federation of United Nations Associations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. The World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) has followed the current review process very closely since its outset and has presented written or oral statements to all intergovernmental meetings held thus far. On each occasion, WFUNA has strongly emphasized that the ultimate aim of the review should be the broadening of non-governmental organizations' access, including national organizations, to the United Nations and the strengthening of the participatory rights of non-governmental organizations.

2. WFUNA has also carefully considered the positions of the European Union, the United States of America and the Group of 77, as well as those of the many non-governmental organizations that have participated in the discussions. In addition, WFUNA has participated in several informal meetings and consultations

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

with member States, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations Secretariat. These exchanges, for which WFUNA is very grateful, have helped immensely as WFUNA has thoroughly examined the draft resolution submitted by the Secretariat (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1).

3. The general debate seems to be coming to its conclusion and WFUNA has reached the stage of discussing specific wording. WFUNA has thus prepared a compilation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and the above-mentioned conference room paper, along with some proposed modifications that attempt to address the concerns and points of view of other parties, which WFUNA hopes will be helpful. It should be noted, however, that the contents of the compilation represent only the views of WFUNA; the compilation is available from WFUNA.

4. In the present statement, WFUNA wishes to take the opportunity to offer some general comments about the approaches it has used in the more detailed document and the general principles underlying its position. In view of the fact that the new Economic and Social Council resolution is expected to regulate relations between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations for the next several years, WFUNA suggests that the text omit what could be termed unnecessary ideological or political references contained in the introduction and in some other parts of the text. A sound legal document should not include such statements for the simple reason that they often leave open the possibility of unfortunate or controversial interpretations. A brief statement of the guiding principles that underlie the resolution is probably desirable and could easily be formulated.

5. With regard to the participatory rights of non-governmental organizations, WFUNA is deeply concerned that they are in danger of being significantly curtailed by several provisions in the proposed draft resolution. For example, WFUNA objects to:

(a) The conditionality attached to the circulation by the Secretary-General of written statements of non-governmental organizations (para. 31);

(b) Imposing on non-governmental organizations the requirement to coordinate joint oral and written submissions by non-governmental organizations (paras. 11 and 51).

6. In addition, although WFUNA recognizes the intergovernmental character of United Nations conferences, it believes that the assertion in paragraph 50 that non-governmental organizations should have no negotiating role in the work of the conference and its preparatory process is both discouraging and unnecessary. Past practice has shown that innovative mechanisms can be found to allow de facto negotiations involving non-governmental organizations.

7. Over the years and especially very recently, consultation with the Secretariat and the strengthening of logistic support for relations with non-governmental organizations has become a matter of importance and urgency. In recognition of this importance, WFUNA has suggested the introduction of uniform language and the considerable strengthening of the wording of old section 10.

8. WFUNA wishes to express its great appreciation that for the first time, rules for non-governmental organizations' participation in United Nations conferences are included in the text proposed by the Secretariat - perhaps in direct response to repeated requests from non-governmental organizations. We would like to point out the importance of admitting to United Nations conferences non-governmental organizations not in consultative status, whether international, regional, national or affiliates of non-governmental organizations in consultative status. While consultative status relates to an ongoing, quasi-permanent relationship, this accreditation constitutes a recognition of the expertise of non-consultative non-governmental organizations on the issues being addressed by the conference. Consequently, membership in an international non-governmental organization in consultative status should have no bearing whatsoever as to whether a national non-governmental organization should be eligible for accreditation to a United Nations conference. The only criteria for admission should be those set out in old section 7. Although it proposes some modifications to the wording of section 7, WFUNA is of the view that the procedures outlined in this section have worked relatively well in the past.

9. Although WFUNA appreciates efforts to define national non-governmental organizations more precisely, it disagrees with the enumeration given in paragraph 7 of the proposed draft. In particular, the formula of "major groups" creates confusion because of its tautology. The other examples given of non-governmental organizations do not appear to be based on any common criteria or factors. Because no enumeration will be rationally clear, WFUNA proposes that this paragraph be either worded more generally or deleted altogether.

10. Notwithstanding this fact, WFUNA must use this opportunity to register publicly its objection to the recent practice of the secretariats of the International Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development to impose, without any legislative authority and at the last minute, limitations on the number of persons allowed to be registered by accredited non-governmental organizations. Experience has shown that even if all persons delegated by a non-governmental organization are registered, there is no danger of a deluge in the conference room so long as there is a system of special access passes.

11. All interested parties are agreed that the time has come to rationalize and harmonize relations between non-governmental organizations and the entire United Nations system, including the specialized agencies. WFUNA therefore submits that paragraphs 19 and 20 are too weak and proposes that a separate, special resolution on this matter be adopted by the Council.

12. Finally, WFUNA would like to re-emphasize its readiness to offer its expertise in the further drafting of a new resolution governing these extremely important consultative arrangements between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the International Chamber of Commerce, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has closely followed the intergovernmental discussion of this matter since the proposal for the review was first advanced and has submitted both oral and written statements of its views on a number of previous occasions.

2. Those statements have basically emphasized the ICC belief that:

(a) The United Nations should be broadly open to truly representative non-governmental organizations;

(b) The review should basically look to expanding the substantive involvement of the non-governmental sector in the work of the United Nations and the expansion of the participatory rights and privileges of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council;

(c) The basic rules embodied in Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) still have validity and should be retained;

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

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(d) The very real distinction between non-governmental organizations that are truly global in scope and represent important constituencies with broad concerns and those with a limited membership and a narrow focus is fundamental to an efficient consultative process and should not be ignored.

3. ICC continues to hold these views and hopes that they will be taken into account during the deliberations of the Working Group.

4. ICC has carefully studied the draft resolution (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1) and has prepared a compilation of suggested modifications; this compilation is available from the ICC/United Nations Liaison Office, New York (Tel. 354-4480).

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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which represents 126 million working people in 187 affiliated organizations in 134 countries and territories, looks back on 46 years of cooperation with the United Nations.

2. It is therefore of great importance to ICFTU that the current review of arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organizations result in enhancing the consultative relationship. ICFTU therefore respectfully submits a number of comments and suggestions regarding the proposals contained in the document (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1) prepared for the meeting of the Working Group.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

Introduction

3. ICFTU proposes that the introduction be deleted. From the purely formal point of view, it would not seem to fit into a United Nations resolution; as regards its substance, it appears to be based on a number of assumptions with which we disagree.

4. Partnerships between non-governmental organizations in developed and developing countries are not a new phenomenon. They have existed for a long time within international organizations. Many of the newly emerging non-governmental organizations have already joined such organizations and are benefiting from the international solidarity and support that they can offer.

5. The call to establish a balance between non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries disregards the fact that the majority of organizations affiliated to international non-governmental organizations are in fact located in developing countries. As to establishing a balance between international and national organizations, this would not only present a host of problems of a practical and political nature but would also be in contravention of Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly places the focus on international organizations.

6. Moreover, there appears to be a confusion between the role of non-governmental organizations in consultative status in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and the work carried out by non-governmental organizations in the field and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

7. The recommendations to the General Assembly in the last paragraph of the proposal, while welcome, would seem to require a separate resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

Paragraph 4

8. ICFTU agrees with the addition of "environment" but would wish to see "cultural, educational, health" etc. retained. Also, "humanitarian and human rights issues" should not be listed separately as though they were not within the competence of the Council.

Paragraph 7

9. The reference to "major groups as defined in Agenda 21", followed by the listing of some groups covered by that term, makes this paragraph somewhat vague. If any such groups are to be singled out, trade unions should be added.

Paragraph 8

10. The Charter of the United Nations clearly states that such arrangements may be made with international organizations, and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned. Accordingly, the focus on working through international non-governmental organizations should be maintained.

Paragraph 10

11. The inclusion of organizations that accept members designated by governmental authorities is unacceptable. This provision is a legacy of the cold war that should be dropped.

Paragraph 11

12. ICFTU objects to the elimination of the phrase "covering, where possible, a substantial number of countries in different regions of the world". The original text would still permit admission of national organizations but would keep the focus on international organizations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Old paragraph 10, which has been retained, would now also be in contradiction with new paragraph 11, as it refers to international organizations.

Paragraph 15

13. ICFTU feels that old paragraph 9 should be retained, since it does allow for the admittance of national organizations and retains the focus on international organizations.

14. ICFTU agrees in principle that national organizations affiliated to an international or regional non-governmental organization should not be admitted, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, if a large number of national non-governmental organizations were to receive consultative status, those organizations that practise international solidarity by working within international organizations would be put at a disadvantage. On the other hand, if national affiliates were to receive separate status, the number of non-governmental organizations would quickly reach numbers that would make the system totally unmanageable.

Paragraph 18

15. It would indeed be desirable to facilitate the cooperation of national and regional organizations (including regional organizations of internationals) with the regional commissions.

Paragraph 19

16. Cooperation between UNDP and other United Nations bodies and regional and national organizations in relation to operational activities is important and desirable but is a separate issue that is not necessarily within the realm of consultative status.

Section 3

17. ICFTU can only support option 1. It would be impossible to categorize non-governmental organizations in accordance with the categories listed in option 2. As to option 3, ICFTU does not see how a large organization, such as those in category I or general consultative status, could be treated in the same manner as a small group devoted to a single issue.

Paragraph 29

18. The word "general" has evidently been left out by mistake.

Paragraph 31

19. ICFTU strongly urges deletion of the phrase "subject to available resources". If the consultative relationship is to be enhanced, it is imperative that the existing rights of non-governmental organizations in consultative status be maintained and be restored where they have been suspended.

Paragraph 32 (d)

20. Again, the word "general" has evidently been omitted by mistake.

Paragraph 37

21. Again, ICFTU strongly urges deletion of the phrase "subject to available resources".

Paragraph 51

22. This paragraph should be divided into two in order to distinguish between organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council and organizations especially accredited to a United Nations conference. Moreover, international non-governmental organizations are by definition constituencies. Also, any grouping of non-governmental organizations for the purpose of presenting a common statement should only occur on a strictly voluntary basis.

Paragraph 59 (i)

23. ICFTU would question the advisability of having the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council organize meetings on matters of substance, since this would divert from its essential role.

Paragraphs 66 and 67

24. These two paragraphs would be better placed in a separate resolution.

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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

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I. CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Introductory remarks in the proposed draft resolution (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1), although informative as a background piece, are not appropriate as part of a resolution. No introductory remarks were made in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV); therefore, it is unnecessary to include them in the proposed resolution.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

II. ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1, proposed paragraph 10

2. Inclusion of organizations that accept members designated by governmental authorities raises some concern. Even though the proposed wording stipulates that "... provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of views of the organization," this provision may be difficult to monitor. There appears to be no mechanism in place to monitor this type of representation.

Section 1, proposed paragraph 11

3. The language in this paragraph restricts individual organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in their relations with the United Nations. The concept of a joint committee would be impossible to manage or enforce. There is no mechanism to adjudicate whether organizations should or should not form a joint committee, or whether or not organizations have similar objectives, interests and basic views in a given field.

Section 1, proposed paragraph 15

4. This proposed paragraph should be rejected and paragraph 9 of 1296 retained. The original text of 1296 provides for national organizations to gain consultative status after consultation with the member State concerned, where they have special experience upon which the Council may wish to draw. The process described in 1296, that is, "in consultation with the Member State concerned," should be retained; the proposed wording "save in exceptional cases" limits the special expertise that should be made available to the United Nations.

Section 3, proposed paragraph 25

5. Of the three options proposed, option 1 corresponds most closely to the category I, category II and Roster system established in 1296. However, the increasing diversity among non-governmental organizations makes it difficult, if not impossible, to classify organizations as either general or special. As an example, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is an international non-governmental organization with a national focus, primarily because the majority of its members are citizens of the United States of America. As international membership increases, however, its programmes and activities will change to reflect that membership.

6. Since AARP has made substantive and sustained contributions to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations in various regions of the world, it would appear that AARP would be classified as general. At the same time, AARP has special competence in the field of ageing issues and is known internationally and regionally for this competence, which would indicate classification as special.

7. These examples are put forth to illustrate the complexity of categorizing a growing number of non-governmental organizations that are reflective of a changing world. It would be the AARP's recommendation to retain the category I, category II, and Roster system rather than enter into another confusing classification system.

Section 4, proposed paragraph 30

8. The proposed wording to supplement attendance arrangements with modalities of participation, such as hearings, round tables, panel discussions, seminars, government dialogues with non-governmental organizations and other mechanisms, is acceptable as long as those arrangements are intended to be supplementary to and not a substitute for attendance as authorized representatives at public meetings.

VII. PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES CONVENED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEIR PREPARATORY PROCESS

9. As to participation in international conferences, it should be stated that those non-governmental organizations already in consultative status shall automatically be accredited to United Nations conferences.

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3 May 1995

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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. The International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centres (IFS) is an international social service organization that has been accredited to the Economic and Social Council in category II for almost 30 years. It is a Federation of over 4,500 agencies, some of which are national members, while others are federations of national agencies; associate members are single community agencies and affiliate members are agencies providing only one or two services, such as day care or youth programmes. In addition, IFS has many individual members (without vote). IFS currently operates in 25 countries (north and south, east and west). Its structure includes an international membership body (General Assembly), an elected Board of Directors and regional groups in Europe and the Americas. IFS also has a growing number of members in Asia and Africa.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

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2. The present statement is based on the long and diverse experience of IFS in working with the United Nations both in the meetings of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and in the preparatory committees and conferences convened by the United Nations.

3. IFS is grateful for the opportunity to discuss with the Working Group its experience as an international non-governmental organization. This has been a generally satisfactory and useful experience in the opinion of IFS, but, especially since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, IFS has become aware of new issues and difficulties. Most of these are not the result of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) but of the proliferation of non-governmental organizations with many divergent concerns and inadequate knowledge of the way in which intergovernmental organizations must operate. IFS is aware of the difficulties faced both by the Secretariat and by Governments in dealing with the problems raised by the new "civil society" bodies as well as their potential contribution. IFS hopes that the current meeting, in addition to dealing with the conference room paper submitted by the Secretariat (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1), will provide an opportunity for a more general discussion of the issues arising from non-governmental organizations' participation in United Nations activities beyond the specific issue of their accreditation to the Economic and Social Council.

4. The above-mentioned conference room paper presents a basis for discussion of the specific issues. The parallel presentation of Council resolution 1296 and the draft resolution submitted by the Secretariat enables both the members of the Working Group and non-governmental organizations to examine proposed changes and evaluate their significance. The comments detailed below note those changes that IFS supports and those that it opposes, some on the basis of substance and others on the basis of form.

Introduction

5. IFS believes that the concept of an introduction of this type is inappropriate in a resolution that is supposed to determine non-governmental organizations' participation over a relatively long term. The specific reference to Agenda 21 is an example of time bind that is confusing, especially in its concept of major groups.

6. If paragraph 1 is retained, some definition is also needed for the concept of "monitor": does it necessarily include "evaluation"? If not, the word "evaluate" should be added in line 5 of page 3 of the proposed draft.

7. A similar problem arises with respect to "academic institutions". Later in the text reference is made to "academic and research". The references should be consistent, if they are maintained.

8. In line 7 from the bottom, reference is made to development activities. IFS believes that this should be qualified by adding "economic and social" before development.

Section 1, paragraph 4

9. IFS supports the addition of the words "global" to "human rights issues" but does not understand the elimination of "cultural, educational, health, scientific and technological". These are not necessarily included in the issues in the new provision; IFS believes they should all be covered.

Section 1, paragraph 7

10. Last line: "trade unions" should be inserted between "business" and "organization".

Section 1, paragraph 11

11. Here IFS has a question of substance. IFS does not understand the deletion from the original paragraph 4 of the requirement "covering where possible a substantial number of countries in different regions of the world". IFS believes that this is an important justification for the competence of a non-governmental organization in many fields of work. In addition, with respect to new paragraph 11 itself, IFS does not believe that organizations should be required "for the purposes of consultation with the Council, form a joint committee or other body authorized to carry on such consultation for the group as a whole". The way in which this question is handled in the original paragraph 4 is less authoritarian in providing for minority opinions. This provision should in any case be maintained, but IFS strongly believes that the formation of a joint or group presentation should be entirely voluntary. IFS is an example of an organization that would have difficulty joining any of the proposed groups since it is a social service organization, a category that has not been specifically included.

Section 1, paragraph 15 (new text)

12. The restated paragraph leaves too little specification as to what is a special case. This should be spelled out somewhat along the lines of old paragraph 9, especially "to help achieve a balanced and effective representation ... where they have special experience".

Section 1, paragraphs 18-20

13. IFS strongly supports paragraph 18. IFS does not fully understand paragraph 19, since its experience indicates that the United Nations Children's Fund has very strong cooperation with non-governmental organizations at the regional level. However, IFS agrees that the United Nations Development Fund and possibly the United Nations Population Fund need to undertake such re-examination. With respect to paragraph 20, IFS agrees that the specialized agencies etc. should re-examine their cooperation with non-governmental organizations but does not see any advantage to their harmonizing, since their mandates and their methods of operation imply different means of cooperation.

Section 2

14. No objections: the changes seem useful.

Section 3, paragraph 25

15. IFS prefers option 1, which defines organizations with special competence in a limited number of fields. However, IFS still believes that the existing definitions are preferable to all the alternatives.

Section 4, paragraph 30

16. The new addition is a great advance over previous practice and IFS hopes that it will receive strong support.

Section 4, paragraph 31

17. IFS protests the limitations placed on circulation by linking it to available resources: IFS knows that this means in practice that the United Nations will not circulate non-governmental organizations' statements, on the grounds of unavailability of resources.

Section 4, paragraph 32

18. IFS would like to see a further change with respect to written statements; there is no real reason why organizations in general consultative status should be enabled to circulate statements four times longer than those in special consultative status.

Section 4, paragraph 33

19. IFS believes that a change should be made here to take into account the actual procedures followed in preparations for the recent series of conferences (preparatory committee sessions and inter-sessional meetings), during which less formal procedures have proved valuable.

Section 4, paragraph 38 (d)

20. IFS prefers the procedures outlined in paragraph 38 (d), (e) and (f) to those outlined in paragraph 32 (d).

Section 7

21. The spelling out of non-governmental organizations' participation in international conferences, including their preparatory processes, is excellent and IFS welcomes that development.

Section 7, paragraph 50

22. IFS recognizes the reason for this paragraph but believes that if it is to be included there ought to be some definition of "negotiating role". Current practice seems to be that non-governmental organizations may observe and are sometimes encouraged to lobby; sometimes they are welcomed in negotiating groups at the invitation of the chairman. In other cases, they are asked not to attend. The diversity of cases is justified but some clarification might help to implement the provision. It might help to say that non-governmental

organizations do not have a negotiating role but may be invited or authorized to work with Governments when they are seeking to negotiate a document.

Section 8

23. IFS strongly supports the provisions concerning suspension and withdrawal and likes the change in paragraph 55 (c).

Section 9, paragraph 58

24. Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations: IFS does not like either option. IFS believes that the Committee should be increased in size but does not understand the regional distribution or the numbers contained therein. IFS thinks that the current procedures should be followed based on an increase, probably up to 24.

Section 9, paragraph 59 (e)

25. IFS has submitted quadrennial reports over many years. Originally, IFS found this a useful process since it was made to assess its own role and review its own contributions. Recently, however, since the reports have been limited to four double space pages, IFS has found it to be almost impossible to cover four years of activity within those limitations; it therefore believes that the periodicity should be more rather than less frequent. On the basis of its experience with quadrennial reports, IFS thinks that it would be more appropriate to have such reports submitted every three years, and that for the sake of the Secretariat they should be staggered to a greater extent. IFS also urges that greater weight be given to the reports; it has always been frustrating to take the writing of reports seriously and then realize that in most cases no one read them.

26. IFS suggests that there should be provision for a subcommittee or an ad hoc committee to meet relatively frequently - at least twice a year - to examine the reports of non-governmental organizations and give their contents more serious discussion. This discussion should conclude with recommendations not only on classification and status but also on the nature of non-governmental organizations' activities. Recommendations concerning non-governmental organizations' reports should be part of a wider effort to bring non-governmental organizations into closer contact with members of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council and to further governmental understanding of the role of non-governmental organizations at the United Nations.

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GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by Rotary International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

* * *

1. As one of the original non-governmental organizations at the Charter Conference in San Francisco 50 years ago and with the largest non-governmental organizations' delegation (49 members in 29 delegations), and as a non-governmental organization holding three Conferences with and about the United Nations this year (two in June and one in October), Rotary International is pleased to submit this statement to the Working Group.

2. Rotary International is largely an operational non-governmental organization, a grass-roots organization dedicated to social and humanitarian work and the promotion of peace, goodwill and international understanding throughout the world, in the east, west, north and south. It has 27,300 clubs in 185 countries and geographical areas with more than 1,200,000 members. It is growing fastest in the developing world.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

3. Rotary International, as a member of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (CONGO), wishes to associate itself with the statements made by CONGO (see E/AC.70/1995/NGO/2) and the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) (see E/AC.70/1995/NGO/3). Specifically, it agrees with the WFUNA statement concerning the introduction, which is too long, redundant, and somewhat vague and confusing in many places. Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) has served the United Nations and non-governmental organizations well for a quarter of a century. The revisions should be made to last a number of years without reference to specific current agendas of the United Nations and also to allow for other and future agendas.

4. Rotary International also agrees with the WFUNA reservations concerning paragraphs 7, 11, 3, 50 and 51, and the need to strengthen section 10 and reword section 7. It does not understand the limitations in paragraph 19 to only those United Nations bodies mentioned.

5. Again, in paragraph 7, Rotary International calls attention to the fact that most not-for-profit private organizations are not business organizations. Further, it believes that for-profit business organizations have great potential to help the United Nations system and work with the United Nations on most social, economic and humanitarian issues; they should be encouraged to do so.

6. Rotary International supports a category system and also supports option 1 in paragraph 25 as the most practical one. Similarly, Rotary International supports option 1 in section 9, paragraph 58, on increasing membership of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council.

7. Finally, if the purpose of the review is to broaden Council resolution 1296 to include regional and national non-governmental organizations, which is needed, then the new section 11 should be strengthened, making provisions for enhanced administration facilities and necessary financing to handle the interfacing of non-governmental organizations with the regional commissions, and at the national levels, not only for ongoing work but also for United Nations conferences.